Between Two Worlds

Remembering Sir Robert Hart

Sir Robert Hart Commemorative Event
22nd February 2013

Robert Hart's grave, Bisham. *(Steve Coone, The Marlow Gardener)*

Dubiety, by Robert Browning
As quoted by Hart to his Secretary in London, James Duncan Campbell, 7th September 1890, *The I.G in Peking.*

Be life so, all things ever the same!
For what has disarmed the world? Outside
Quiet and peace: inside nor blame,
Nor want, nor wish, whate'er betide.

Art Design: Penny Dang
Event sponsor: The British Inter-University China Centre (BICC)
Egham, Surrey 22nd February 2013

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Robert Hart, ca. 1866. *(Special Collections, Queen's University Belfast, MS 15/6/1/B3)*

Event Programme

10.20: Reception opens at All Saints, Bisham, for guests' arrival

11:00: Commemoration Service begins with rededication of the grave, followed by readings and music

11:30: Service ends

11:40: Short walk to Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre to board riverboat Southern Comfort

12.00: Presentations and discussion aboard boat

13.00: Boat departs Bisham for lunch on the Thames

15.20: Arrival at Maidenhead and the end of the Event

Hans van de Ven's Address

I have chosen to read to you verses from Isaiah 49 because, when Robert Hart decided to publish in a book the articles he had written to plead China's cause in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion, he chose to do so under the title *These From the Land of Sinim*, a phrase taken from Isaiah 49, verse 12. Until Frank King, a historian of China who past away last December, set us straight, all of us assumed that Hart chose this title merely because in the nineteenth century many, and especially China missionaries, believed Sinim to be the one reference to China in the Bible. However, as Frank made clear, much more was going on, and what was going on is revealing of Hart's personality and the continuing influence of Christianity upon him.

Throughout his career as Inspector General of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, Hart was at pains to veil his Christianity. He had no truck with what he regarded as missionary hypocrisy or grand-standing. In one article in *These From the Land of Sinim*, Hart argued that the presumptiveness of missionaries and their insistence on being treated just like Chinese officials had helped trigger the anti-Christian violence in China. In a diary entry of the 1860s, he recorded, with approval, a conversation between John Meadows, a non-conformist China adventurer, and a Dr MacCowan, who had been extolling the equality of all races. Meadows had asked MacCowan whether he would sleep with a black woman, a question which elicited a rushed 'no, no, no'. Hart commented that he had thought the question clever and noted that 'we may hold high sounding beliefs eloquently but insincerely'. He believed that it was important to be truthful to one's beliefs, but also that it was not easy to be so.

Hart arrived in China an intense young man, profoundly shaped by his Wesleyan upbringing in northern Ireland. In his diary, he recorded many religious dreams he had at the time. As we know, he would not become a missionary and instead dedicated his life to building up the Customs Service. He did so, no doubt because he was attracted to the prestige and the salary that came with being the Inspector General, but also because he did not believe himself sufficiently worthy or pure, regularly failing to live up to the standards in his private life to which he believed Christians should adhere, especially in his relationships with women, failings for which he castigated himself in his diary. At the same time, he saw the challenges of building up the service and the frustrations thrown his way as serving a higher purpose, or, as a put it in his diary, as a 'course of moral training which is fitting me for something in the future'.

That moment came in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion, when the question was whether the countries that had invaded China to relieve the Siege of the Legations should negotiate with the Qing, or whether they should overthrow it and divide the country up among themselves or place it under some sort of international supervision. Hart decided that it should be the first. As Frank King made clear, he read verses of Isaiah 49 as a personal instruction from God to speak out to the British and to other foreigners, to articulate an unpopular view, and to do his best to realize a reconciliation, convinced that this was the special task for which God had prepared him and had kept him in readiness. Or, as he stated to Duncan Campbell, the head of the London Office of the Customs Service, in a letter written just after the Siege had been lifted: 'I am horribly hurt by all that has occurred, but … I hold on to be of use to the Service, to China, and to the general interest. I think I can be of use, and only I in all three directions'.

It is because of the background sketched out above that I believe it appropriate to read from Isaiah 49 at the rededication of Robert Hart's grave:

1 Listen, O coastlands, to Me, And take heed, you peoples from afar! The Lord has called Me from the womb; From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name.

2 And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, And made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me.

3 And He said to me, 'You are My servant, O Israel, In whom I will be glorified.'

4 Then I said, 'I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; Yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, And my work with my God.'

5 And now the Lord says, Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, So that Israel is gathered to Him (For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, And My God shall be My strength),

6 Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'

7 Thus says the Lord, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, To Him whom man despises, To Him whom the nation abhors, To the Servant of rulers: 'Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, Because of the Lord who is faithful, The Holy One of Israel; And He has chosen You.'

8 Thus says the Lord: 'In an acceptable time I have heard You, And in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You As a covenant to the people, To restore the earth, To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages;

9 ‘That You may say to the prisoners, “Go forth”, To those who are in darkness, “Show yourselves”. They shall feed along the roads,
And their pastures shall be on all desolate heights.’

10 ‘They shall neither hunger nor thirst, Neither heat nor sun shall strike them; For He who has mercy on them will lead them, Even by the springs of water He will guide them.

11 ‘I will make each of My mountains a road, And My highways shall be elevated.’

12 ‘Surely these shall come from afar; Look! Those from the north and the west, And these from the land of Sinim.’

13 Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted His people, And will have mercy on His afflicted.

(The New King James Bible, Isaiah 49:1-13)
Hans van de Ven, University of Cambridge

Robert Bickers' Address

Extract from Hart's unpublished diaries:

Sunday, 18 April, 1869. 同治八年三月初七日 (Emperor Tongzhi 8th year, 3rd month, 7th day).

[…] I want to be useful, and to do useful work: I don't care whether my name is remembered or not, but I do desire to carry in my own heart the consciousness of having been of some use to my fellow men. Have I been of any use to them yet? […]

I have made use of time and opportunity: I have laboured diligently – studying as a youth, & working as a man … but if I had not caught time by the forelock, & seized the opportunity forcefully some other could have done so, and the position, patronage, influence & wealth – which are now mine pro tem – would simply have been another's: – and he too might have made a better use of them than I have done or can hope to do.

[…] all this action commencing in self – carried on for self – and ending in self, which it may be styled duty done in providing the means, what has it wrought out in the way of a useful end?

[…] as a member of society – as a man among men and one of the human family, I fancy I have done my duty as such in my position & to my fellows … Not only did I try to do the called-for & paid-for work of each position well – but I tried to do it so that I should be pronounced to be doing it better than another could, &, at the same time, … I tried to prepare & fit myself for any higher duty that might devolve on me, … That is, I have earned my livelihood, & among men have won my right to live.

The point to which I have thus got can scarcely be said to carry me beyond myself: for it simply shows that, to some extent, I have done my duty to myself, & think that I have done my duty to others.

[…] of what use has the work I've been paid to do really been to the world at large through the immediate circle touched & affected?

My work in the Consular Service was work done in furtherance of the views of England – work done to carry out the obligations into which England had entered in order on the one hand to protect, by extraterritoriality, her own subjects from injustice, and on the other to ease the way for China, so long isolated and secluded, to be brought into contact with the west, and under the influences of a Christian civilisation. That work, therefore, in the Consular Service was necessary work … [it] may too be styled not only necessary but grand.

Leaving the Consular and joining the Customs Service, I have not been leaving the groove in which I had previously ran: the work continued to be in the same country, & had the advantage of work in the Consular Service by being the substitution of a direct for an indirect – I may say, of a positive for a negative agency. … I am conscious of having acted & lived in the past with many high motives – with many strong desires for usefulness – & with much unselfishness at work in me: at the same time. I am also conscious of the act that petty motives & selfish ends have not been always absent; I have prayed & laboured to do the right things, &, if I have not achieved popularity, I have maintained & strengthened my position, & with it the positions of all those who, when one was selected instead of another, owing all to me, yet have turned against me.

I think then that I am right in concluding the work I am paid by men to do to be useful work: work that will have beneficial results in the future, apart from its mere effect in meeting the will of the present, & answering the immediate end for which it is wanted & paid.

Beyond work paid for, what have I done? Officially & in my public capacity, I have been instrumental in getting China to take some little steps in the direction of what we, in the west, are pleased to style progress, & to regard as of utility to the human family: … I have helped the Chinese in this way towards a more intimate connection with the west, and of preservation thereby of peace & a better understanding, … and … I have aided [them] in many troubles – internal & external, & have been of use to them in the settlement of many questions & by the giving of much good advice. Thus publicly & officially, I think I may claim to have done something for my fellows, & the world, over and above what the world has employed or paid me to do.

[…] Privately, of what use have I been? Setting aside the fact of the use I have been to myself – bettering my position, growing in wealth, and accomplishing some of the hopes & dreams of boyhood & youth – I have the satisfaction of knowing that I have been of use to my family & friends […]

The conclusion, then, that I have come to regarding the past is that: without forgetting many failures, many errors, many follies & many sins – many good resolves broken, & many good resolves & works ran counter to – many things done that ought not to have been done, & many things left undone that ought to have been done: I ought to look back with gratitude & thankfulness to the past, as having been a past in which I have worked usefully & well – as a past not wholly wasted, even where the most was not made of it – as a past in which I have been doing & trying to do my duty, and as a past in which worldly success has gone hand in hand with the desire to do right, & with the attempt to be a useful & efficient servant of society in my day and generation. And for this, I ought to be, & am thankful to God: whom I try to acknowledge in all my ways – whose pardon I crave for all my sins & shortcomings – whose goodness to me I acknowledge & am thankful for – and whose blessing & guidance I daily pray for, and now require more than ever – now that I am reflecting on the past & endeavouring to think out my duty – as His creation – for the future.

Robert Bickers, Bristol University

Sir Robert Hart's Chinese band, conducted by M. Encarnacao, in Beijing, 1907.
(Special Collections, Queen's University Belfast, MS 15/6/9/2)

'The band […] has a noteworthy place in the history of new Chinese music (that is European classic music in China) and of cultural exchange. It was the first (civilian) brass band composed of Chinese musicians. We have snatches of its history, and reports of how Hart's young musicians were poached by leading Qing officials as a vogue grew for bands in the early years of the twentieth century.'

(Robert Bickers, Visualising China Blog)

Music Programme

Robert Hart was an accomplished amateur violinist and cellist, and in the 1880s also famously established a brass band, using Chinese musicians. At today's event, the organisers are delighted to have music provided by the local Waltham St Lawrence Silver Band, under its conductor, Mr Derek Holland.

Mr Holland has prepared a selection of pieces drawn in part from Hart's own handwritten programmes for performances of his ensemble at garden parties in the diplomatic quarter in Beijing (some of this music is still in the repertoire today) with a selection of others in keeping with the music Hart's guests would have heard at these events.

Slaidburn	W Rimmer
Salute to Sullivan	Arthur Sullivan
Gold and Silver waltz	Lehar
Chit Chat Polka	J Strauss son
Bells across the Meadows	Ketelbey
Finiculi Finicula (Napoli)	Denza (from Hart's programmes)
Teddy Bear's Picnic	John Bratton
The Chieftain	J Jubb (from Hart's programmes)
Lustpiel Overture	Kela Bela
Amparita Roca	Jamie Texador
In a Monastery garden	Ketelbey
Neapolitan serenade	Gerhard Winkleyr
El Capitan	Sousa (from Hart's programmes)
Deep Harmony	Handel Parker
Trumpet Voluntary	Jeremiah Clarke
Stars and Stripes Forever	Sousa (from Hart's programmes)
Nights of Gladness	Charles Ancliffe
Blaze away	Holzmann
The Lonely Mill	Handel Lancaster
Marche Militaire	Schubert
Minuet and Galop	Offenbach
Soldiers in the Park	Lionel Monckton

I.G Circular No 1844, Announcement of Hart's death

CIRCULAR No. 1844 (SECOND SERIES).

Inspector General, Sir Robert Hart: death of, on 20th September 1911, announcing; issue of Imperial Edict expressing Throne's sorrow, eulogising services, and conferring posthumous title on.

INSPECTORATE GENERAL OF CUSTOMS,
PEKING, *26th September* 1911.

SIR,

It is with profound regret that I have officially to communicate to the Service, and record, the death of the Inspector General, Sir Robert Hart.* His health had been failing for some months, and on 16th September, while staying at Marlow, in Buckinghamshire, he caught a chill, from the effects of which he died at 10 P.M. on the 20th September.

The sad intelligence was officially received in Peking late in the evening of the 21st September, and their Excellencies the Ministers of the Shui-wu Ch'u at once directed that all Customs flags throughout China should be half-masted on the 22nd September and on the day of the funeral, which took place at Marlow on 25th September. On the 22nd September the Acting Inspector General sent a telegram, through the Non-Resident Secretary, expressing in the name of the Service the deepest sympathy with Lady Hart and the family of the late Inspector General, and he further instructed Mr. H. E. Hobson, the senior Commissioner on leave in England, to represent the Service officially at the funeral. Mr. Hobson was also requested to represent the Postmaster General and the Imperial Chinese Postal Service.

On the 23rd September an Imperial Edict was issued expressing the sorrow of the Throne for the death of the Inspector General, recounting and eulogising his great services to China, and conferring upon him the posthumous title of Grand Guardian of the Heir Apparent (太子太保)†

諭旨劄行署總稅務司欽遵查
伊子赫承先著賞換雙眼
贊助茲據稅務處呈遞
文館赴各國襄會設立
賞加尚書銜該總稅務司供職中
假回國復
賞加按察使銜布政使銜花翎
先朝恩遇歷經
上諭總稅務司赫德於咸豐年
聞逝世等語片行查照等
爲劄行事准外務部片稱
稅務處劄行署總稅務司

On 25th September, the day on which the Inspector General's funeral took place in England, a memorial service was held in the Church of Our Saviour, Peking, by the Right Reverend C. P. Scott, D.D., Bishop of the Church of England in North China, assisted by his clergy. The service, which was most impressive, was attended by the Customs and Postal staffs, Chinese officials, representatives of the foreign Powers, and large numbers of the general public.

The Bishop, in a few well-chosen and feeling words, spoke of the character and great life work of Sir Robert Hart. A copy of his address will be printed and distributed to the Service. It will appeal alike to those who mourn their great Chief as a personal friend and those to whom he was no more than a highly revered and honoured name.

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悼
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華

正一品封典太子少保銜前因病請
由其經手劃辦以及辦理船廳設同
倘諮詢在中國宣力五十餘年深資
殊情深加恩著賞加太子太保銜
大臣電稱總稅務司赫德昨晚在鄉

All Saints, Bisham, February 2013. (Jeffrey Griffiths, Marlow Society)

I.G Circular No 3901, Hart's statue on the Shanghai Bund

CIRCULAR No. 3901 (SECOND SERIES).

Sir Robert Hart: statue of, moved to new site on the Bund, Shanghai, notifying, and pictures of, circulating.

SHANGHAI OFFICE OF THE
INSPECTORATE GENERAL OF CUSTOMS,
SHANGHAI, 26*th April* 1929.

SIR,

The recent widening of the Shanghai Bund in the vicinity of the new Harbour Office enabled the Shanghai Municipal Council to execute their original plan and place the Hart Monument on a conspicuous site on the Bund, opposite the Custom House. In their opinion, the surroundings there, being closely associated with Sir Robert Hart, invest the statue with a more personal and, therefore, a more effective appeal to the public. The "North-China Daily News" of the 21st February 1928 commented on the event as follows: "The large island site on which the statue of Sir Robert "Hart rests is located in a central and prominent position on the "Bund, and the Municipal Council is to be congratulated on the "excellence of the arrangement, which represents a marked "advance in civic and road improvements. The statue itself, which "is unusually artistic, is seen to much greater advantage on the "imposing new pedestal so skilfully designed by the Public Works "Department; and the handsome bronze panels, on which the "original inscription and the unique lists of honours are boldly "engraved, have been executed in first-class style. The Great "I.G.'s memorial has thus been provided with an environment and "a setting worthy of the man who remains the most interesting "foreign personality that ever figured in China, whose fame has "spread to the four quarters of the globe, and whose romantic and "illustrious career in the Far East is without a parallel."

As this is a matter of general interest to all members of the Service, Chinese and foreign, I circulate herewith pictures of the statue and bronze panels as they now appear; and extra copies of this Circular are provided for Customs libraries, etc.

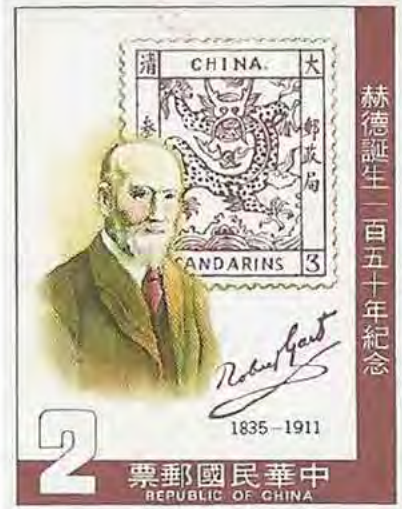
I am, etc.,

F. W. MAZE,
Inspector General.

This statue was the work of the well-known sculptor Mr. Henry Pegram, R.A. The cost, £1,700, was subscribed by members of the Customs and Postal Service and the Shanghai Municipal Council. When first erected on the 25th May 1914 it stood on The Bund lawn, immediately to the north of the Custom House.

Sir Robert Hart's statue, 1913. (*Special Collections, Queen's University Belfast, MS 15/6/1/B37*)

I. G Circular No 706, Establishment of the Chinese Post Office



INSPECTORATE GENERAL OF CUSTOMS,
PEKING, *9th April* 1896.

SIR,

AN Edict assenting to the Yamên's proposal to introduce a Government postal system was issued on the 20th March and communicated to me officially a few days later. This postal idea, as you know, has long occupied the attention of the Chinese authorities—the suggestion to establish an Imperial Post on Western lines having been made by myself so far back as June 1861, when I first came to Peking; but differences of opinion at the capital and in the provinces, and changes from time to time not only in the occupants of the official posts most concerned, but in the earlier and later views of those officials themselves, have combined to discourage effort and delay action till now. Government has, however, at last taken the matter seriously, and the Decree just received creates an Imperial Post for all China and confides its management to myself. Notwithstanding the fact that the sanction is both definitive and Imperial, a very modest beginning will still be made, and the system will be both introduced quietly and developed slowly; but while procedure will be so planned as to avoid friction in respect of whatever might hurt deserving peoples' livelihoods by unnecessary interference with existing institutions or embarrass and occasion difficulties for officials and governments, it is confidently expected that some future day will see the Imperial Post functioning widely and fully appreciated, the people finding in it and its developments an everyday convenience and the Government a useful servant and, in this populous, industrious, and letter-loving country, a perennial source of revenue. I append an English version of the regulations laid before the Emperor in the Yamên's Memorial—necessarily brief to invite perusal, and yet presenting a sufficiently comprehensive scheme to warrant sanction; they are but the outline, so to speak, of a programme yet to be filled in, and they and this Circular will of course be supplemented by detailed rules and followed up by fuller explanations and instructions later on.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) ROBERT HART,
Inspector General.

To

THE COMMISSIONERS OF CUSTOMS.

Weipin Tsai, 'Sir Robert Hart'

'Modest in life, in death Sir Robert Hart, G.C.M.G., Inspector-General of Customs and Posts in China, went without pomp to his grave. It was difficult to imagine that, amid a small assembly of mourners, in a sequestered village of Berkshire, final rites were being performed over one the influence of whose genius had been world-wide.'
(South Bucks Free Press, Wycombe, Maidenhead and Marlow Journal etc., 29th September, 1911.)

Who would have ever anticipated that Sir Robert Hart (1835 –1911), would be laid to rest at this peaceful spot in Bisham churchyard? Born in Portadown, County Armagh, and educated in Somerset and Belfast, he travelled to China in 1854 at the tender age of 19, and spent a lifetime there, returning permanently to Great Britain only in his final years.

Hart joined the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs Service in 1859, and was formally appointed its second Inspector General (I.G) in 1863, a post he held for 48 years. Under Hart's patient, persistent but at times also passionate direction, the Chinese Maritime Customs Service was built up to become the most influential institution in modern China. Besides setting up and administering the systems which enabled the opening up of China to foreign trade, Hart and his commissioners at treaty ports also managed the establishment of diplomatic missions; set up national postal, cartographic and meteorology services; created translation schools; and organised lighthouse construction and harbour modernisation, as well as many other innovations that eased China's passage into the modern world.

Hart, who though British also held a very high-rank within the Imperial Qing Government, occupied a unique position in modern Chinese history after the end of the Opium Wars in the mid nineteenth century. Hart's career not only reflects the progress of Chinese modernisation, but also mirrors the Sino-British relations at different stages. In addition to those important activities listed above, he was also often invited by the Chinese government to act as a mediator in many negotiations with the Western countries, and was referred as 'our Hart' by his senior Chinese colleagues.

As a young man, brimming with enthusiasm and driven by a Victorian ethic of service, Hart worked in China as a consular official before joining the Customs Service. As its Inspector General, Hart stewarded the Customs Service through many difficult decades, and was at the centre of China's adjustment to the demands and perils of a world dominated by the European powers. In his old age, Hart was resolute in his belief that China would eventually regain its prestige and status among the nations of the world.

Hart had a town house in Cadogan Place, London, but after his final return from China in 1908, he and his wife travelled a lot around the UK. They visited Belfast and Taunton, and also leased houses in various seaside towns including Torquay. Hart and his wife rented 'Fingest Grove' at Bolter End, near Marlow, from the beginning of August 1911, where he received correspondence and guests. Unfortunately, Hart's health deteriorated quickly and unexpectedly shortly after they arrived at Bolter End and he died there on 20th September 1911.

Hart was not really known to the local communities around Marlow and it is a puzzle for historians why he was buried at Bisham, with several other churches being much closer to Bolter End. It could be that Hart had heard of the Hoby memorials in All Saints Church, paid a visit, and was stuck by the tranquil beauty of the church's setting. Or perhaps the environment of Bisham village, with its beautiful setting amidst the river and hills, reminded him of Ningbo in China, a place of which he had strong, very fond memories. Perhaps he expressed this view to his family, and when he suddenly died, they decided to bury him there.

This year will mark the 150th anniversary of Hart's appointment as Inspector General and on 22nd February a ceremony will be held beside his humble grave in All Saints' churchyard at Bisham. The event will start with a blessing of the restored gravestone, followed with some words of dedication by Professor Hans van de Ven (University of Cambridge) and Professor Robert Bickers (University of Bristol). Waltham St. Lawrence Silver Band will play tunes that were played by Hart's famous brass band (the first ever in China) during his days in the diplomatic quarter in Beijing, next to the Emperor's great palace in the Forbidden City. The group of visitors, which will include British and Chinese diplomats, scholars and others with a background in Sino-British relations, will then have a river cruise on the Thames. The organisers hope to follow up this event with the creation of a fund in memory of Robert Hart to celebrate his many legacies for China, Britain, Ireland, and the world.

(Originally published in Bisham Newsletter, February - March 2013)
Weipin Tsai, Royal Holloway, University of London

Royal Holloway University of London

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

University of BRISTOL

Dear Sir/Madam,

We cordially invite you to join us to commemorate the life, career and contribution of Sir Robert Hart.

Robert Hart, born in Portadown in 1835, joined the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs in 1859, and was formally appointed its second Inspector General in 1863, a post he held for 48 years until his death in September 1911. This year will mark the 150th anniversary of this appointment. We want to mark 2013 as The Year of Robert Hart, and to use this opportunity to revisit his life and career.

As a young man, brimming with enthusiasm and driven by a Victorian ethic of service, Hart travelled to China, working as a consular official before joining the Customs Service. As I.G., the mature Hart stewarded this Service through many difficult decades, and was at the centre of China's adjustment to the demands and perils of a world dominated by the European powers. In his old age, Hart was resolute in his belief that China would eventually regain its prestige and status among the nations of the world.

Besides devoting himself to China's modernisation, Hart stands out as a unique figure, a European working at the heart of the Chinese state, adept at navigating both Chinese bureaucracy and sensibility, as well as the murky realms of global politics and diplomacy. Inspired by a strong liberal cosmopolitanism, Hart saw British-Chinese relations at their worst, in the fog of war in the late 1850s, but thereafter dedicated himself to trying to ensure that these two nations never again came into conflict. When they did, in 1900, he worked to soften the recriminations that would follow by presenting China's case to the world.

Robert Hart was buried at All Saints, Bisham, Berkshire, where his grave carries the inscription: 'After he had served his own generation, by the will of God, he fell on sleep'. He rests at this tranquil site, most fittingly on the banks of a great river, the Thames, where we will hold this commemoration. The tombstone is being restored, and we will rededicate the grave with a short service with music. The ceremony will be followed by a tour on the Thames on a sailing barge. We hope to use these events to create a fund in memory of Robert Hart to celebrate his many legacies for China, Britain, Ireland, and the world.

We hope you will accept our invitation, and we are looking forward to seeing you at Bisham on 22nd February 2013.

Best wishes.

Dr Weipin Tsai,
Royal Holloway University of London

Professor Hans van de Ven,
University of Cambridge

Professor Robert Bickers ,
University of Bristol

British Inter-university China Centre

The report on Hart's funeral in 1911

SOUTH BUCKS FREE PRESS, WYCOMBE, MAIDENHEAD AND MARLOW JOURNAL ETC. 29TH SEPTEMBER, 1911.

FUNERAL OF THE LATE SIR ROBERT HART.

Modest in life, in death Sir Robert Hart, G.C.M.G., Inspector-General of Customs and Posts in China, went without pomp to his grave. It was difficult to imagine that, amid a small assembly of mourners, in a sequestered village of Berkshire, final rites were being performed over one the influence of whose genius had been world-wide. But the ceremony in Bisham Churchyard, on Monday afternoon, was in accord with the career of the distinguished administrator, who gave the greatest part of his life to China. It was beautiful in its simplicity, impressive in its solemnity, and yet there were surroundings that gave brilliancy to the scene.

Everything was hushed in the picturesque valley, where the Thames, meandering through rich woodlands, laps the side of the hallowed acre which gives Sir Robert Hart his resting place. Residents on the waterside go to their Parish Church in boats, and the tranquil flow of the river, whose surface sparkled on Monday under the bright sunlight, was only disturbed by the quiet stroke of a waterman as he went to attend the funeral. A short distance away is Bisham Abbey, which originally belonged to the Knights Templars, and within the precincts of which are interred the remains of nobles who have made history. In the ancient Parish Church are tombs that bear historic names, and under its shadow are monuments to men who have devoted themselves to the service of their country.

Sir Robert Hart, having only resided in the district for a short period, was unknown to the inhabitants, except by reputation; but on all sides yesterday there were signs of mourning, and at Marlow flags were flying at half-mast, Fingest Grove, where Sir Robert died, is about six miles from Bisham. When the funeral procession reached Marlow it was joined by carriages, in which were mourners who had travelled by special train from London.

Preceding the hearse was a carriage conveying magnificent floral tributes, which indicated sympathy in the Far East as well as in the West. On the coffin rested a wreath from Lady Hart, the widow. The principal mourners were Sir Edgar Bruce Hart (son) and Mr. H. C. Brodie (son-in-law), immediately behind whom was the Chinese Minister, who was accompanied by the Commercial Attaché (Mr. Y. K. Tsang). On reaching the lych-gate leading to the Church, the procession was met by the Vicar (the Rev. W. Farrer). Before and during the entrance of the mourners at the Church, the Organist (Mr. V. G. Kibblewhite) played "I know that my Redeemer liveth" (from "The Messiah"), "Blest are the Departed" (Spohr's "Last Judgement"), Beethoven's "Funeral March," and "O, rest in the Lord" ("Elijah") Chopin's "Funeral March" was played when the procession left the Church. The coffin bore the inscription: –

SIR ROBERT HART, BART., G. C. M. G.,

Born 20th February, 1835.
Died 20th September, 1911.

The pall-bearers were Mr. H. E. Hobson, Mr. C. Hannen, Mr. W. T. Lay, Mr. H. M. Hillier, Mr. C. C. Clarke, and Mr. E. O. Reis, past and present Commissioners of Chinese Customs.

Mr. H. E. Hobson, senior Commissioner of Customs on leave, officially represented the acting Inspector- General and the Customs service, and also the Postmaster-General and the Chinese postal service. There were also present – Sir Walter Hillier, Professor Bayley Balfour (Edinburgh, representing privately the Acting Inspector-General of Customs, Pekin), Admiral of the Fleet Sir Edward Seymour, Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, Vice-Admiral Kinahan, Sir Charles Dudgeon (representing the China Association), Major-General Upperton, Mr. Guy Hillier, Mr. Arnold Ellert, Mr. H. Crouch Batchelor, E. G. Hillier Mr. Spencer Chapman, Captain Werlich (U.S.N.), Mr. Edward R. P. Moon (representing the China Emergency Committee), the Rev. R. J. Robb (Belfast), Capt. Lloyd, Mr. F. W. Carey, Professor the Rev. Owen, the Rev. John Steele (representing the Chinese Mission of the Presbyterian Church of England), Mr. A. M. Townsend, Dr. J. Johnson, Professor Dixon (Belfast University), Mr. A. R. Burkill, Mr. Arthur Haughton, Dr. T. G. Nicholson, Mr. B. C. George Scott, Mr. Herbert F. Brady, Mr. G. Brown, Mrs. R. Easterbrook (Mrs. R. W. Little, of Shanghai, China), and the following past and present members of the Chinese Customs Service:– Mr. R. C. Guernier, Mr. A. H. H. Maclean, Mr. F. W. Carey, Mr. G. F. Montgomery, Mr. C. Thome, Mr. A. G. H. Carruthers, Mr. Deighton Braysher, Mr. Hilliard, Mr. J. B. Fitzgibbon, Mr. M. Osborne, and Mr. H. Sindstadt.

The body was interred in an ordinary grave, the sides of which were lined with ivy and flowers.

Beautiful wreaths were brought by Mr. H. E. Hobson, on behalf of Mr. Algeo (Acting Inspector-General), Mr. Piry (Postmaster-General), and the members of the Chinese postal service, and the Revenue and Marine Department of the Customs service. Wreaths were also sent by: – The Staff of the London Office of the Inspectorate-General of Chinese Customs, the Wai-wu-pu (the Chinese Foreign Office), Li Ching Fong (past Minister to Great Britain) Sheng Hsuen Huan, Florence Lady Walsham, the President and Council of the Ulster Association in London, Mr. A. H. Jaques, Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Henniker Heaton, Mrs. Nelthorpe Beauclerk, Mr. J. Platt and Mr. Ernest Platt, Miss A. N. L'Evesque Pirkis, Colonel and Mrs. Lucas Scudamore, Captain and Mrs. Percival Werlich, Mrs. Henry Daniell and Miss E. T. Daniell, Mrs. Noble, Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Ellert, the Misses Bredon, and others. The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs. Hunt and Son, of High Wycombe.

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